

# THE GUIDEBOOK



## THE MODLIN FORTRESS



PARK  
TRZECH  
KULTUR



# THE MODLIN FORTRESS

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The park was established by the Russians at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries or at the beginning of the 20th century on the combat slope built in the Napoleon's times. The miners' pavements might have been preserved under the slope which are inaccessible today. The park situated in the central part of the Modlin Fortress was conceptually linked with the neighbouring Tsarist blocks and the officer's canteen. After Poland had regained independence, it was tidied up and named the Romuald Traugutt Park. In those times, it stretched up to the Narew River and was crowned with the viaduct at the Ostrołęka Gate connected by stairs with a sailors' marina.

On 15 August 1923, a correspondent of the "Polska Zbrojna" military magazine wrote that on 5 August that year, [on the 59th anniversary of executing Traugutt for his participation in the January Uprising] a ceremonial opening and consecration of the park was held which "was completed and tidied up due to the efforts of the Fortress commander, Col. [Edward] Malewicz."

The present area of the park was shaped after World War II. Bearing no official name, it stretched between the canteen and the Tsarist blocs. The set of park avenues was altered then and the asphalt and small architecture were introduced including the band shell and the elements symbolising the military units which stationed in the Fortress (stone obelisks).

The name The Park of Three Cultures has been functioning since 2014 and it refers to three cultures which had the greatest influence on the Modlin Fortress. Due to the effort of the Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki authorities, the revitalisation of the park was carried out on the basis of the historic set of the park alleys in a reference to its times of glory. The revitalised space has become a centre of many cultural events addressed to residents and tourists.

Ostawiony, „waleczny” żołnierz wymaga wydatku 5000 samo Włoch. 1000 kosztuje Francuz, Belgij- z szeregu „blaszanych żołnier- ch” potencji, jak Urugwaj, San Salvador i Luxemburg. 1000 mk. zadawałbisa się Brazylija, Peru, Hiszpanja. Niżej 2000 mk. stoją: We- Ekwador, Estonia, Łotwa, Gikaragua, San Domingo i iżej 1000 mk. wymaga żoł- osławji, Bułgarii, Nowej Ze- uragwaju, Niemiec (?). Por- boliwja, Litwa, Austria płać jakom po 633 mk. rym końcu tej litanji wydat- jnych stoi szary żołnierz który na ekwipunek i wyży- pochłania rocznie „aż” całe złotych. najniższy szczybel wydatków ch, bo tyle samo wydaje Dumnia nieco mniej

## KORESPONDENCJE

### Uroczystości sierpniowe w Modlinie.

Modlin, 8 sierpnia.

Dnia 5 sierpnia b. r. w Obozie Warow- nym Modlin odbyło się uroczyste otwarcie i poświęcenie parku im. Romualda Trau- gutta.

O jedenastej przed południem w ko- oleie garnizonowym na Placu Rewji odbyła się zwykła masa, po której ks. kapelan Wójcik wygłosił okolicznościowe kazanie do żołnierzy w związku z 59 rocznicą strac- enia na stokach warszawskiej Cytadeli bojowników o wolność oraz z okazji 9-ej rocznicy wymarszu Legionów na bój o Polskę.

Wieczorem rozpoczęło się poświęcenie parku, który został wykończony i dopro- wadzony do porządku staraniem dowódcy twierdzy pułk. Malewicza.

U wylotu głównej alei ku rzeczce abudo- wano nad ulicą Księstwa Warszawskiego silny i wysoki wiadukt, który schodami łączy się z przystanią pływacką. Pracę

wykonat w nader krótkim czasie i w trud- nych warunkach kpt. Sewerin ze swym XVIII baonem asperów.

Na placu koło kasyna wobec zebranych gości i wojskowych kpt. Jastrzębski mówił o znaczeniu powstania styczniowego. Na werwante mówcy obecni powstałi i trzy- krotnym „Niech żyją!” oddali hołd ucze- stniczącym w uroczystości weteranom. Dalei wręczyli im kwiaty.

Dowódca twierdzy podziękował nastę- pnie zebrany za udział w uroczystości, podkreślając wydatką pracę i pułku as- perów i marynarzy w budowie wiaduktu, przystani i upiększeniu parku. Na zakoń- czenie odśpiewano przy dźwiękach orkie- stry asperskiej „Rota” i nastąpiła deflata przy świetle pochodni i odgranie cap- stryku.

Wieczorem odbył koncert orkiestr na werandzie kasyna.



# THE THREE CULTURES

## THE FRENCH CULTURE

The decision to build the Modlin Fortress was taken by Napoleon Bonaparte. It happened precisely on 1 December 1806. Napoleon claimed that "who possesses Warsaw, Modlin and Serock is the ruler of the entire Poland." Originally, it was meant to be a temporary Fortress located on two islands situated at the mouth of the Narew River. The task to design and build the Fortress was assigned to General Prosper de Chasseloup-Laubat. During the initial scouting of the terrain, the general noticed a better location on a high hill near Modlin village and the building of the Fortress began in its present location. As early as two years later, the Modlin Fortress acquired its initial combat readiness. In that time, wooden, free standing pavilions were erected – the barracks for the troops and the brick building accommodating a hospital, a drugstore and the uniform warehouse. Also the main embankment of the Fortress was completed. In subsequent years, Napoleon transformed the Fortress from the food warehouse into a military fortification. Jean Mallet de Granville was appointed the constructor of the Fortress. Even several thousand people were employed at times on the construction site, then.

The 1810-1812, were the years of glory of the Modlin Fortress in the Napoleon's epoch. It was nominated by Napoleon the principle Fortress of the Duchy of Warsaw. On 1 February 1812, Modlin was granted the municipality by a decree of the Grand Duke of Warsaw, Frederic Augustus. In that time, new fortifications were built according to the designs of the French Fortification Committee and the final design was approved by Napoleon himself.

In August 1812, due to the Moscow expedition, the fortification works were suspended. Up till then, some facilities were built which we can admire today like the main earth embankment of the Fortress consisting of the combat slope where the park was established; the main communication passage of the Fortress – the brick Northern Gate facing one of several ravelins or the gunpowder magazine from 1811. The external embankment remained unfinished.

The Napoleon period ended in the Modlin Fortress after Bonaparte's defeat near Moscow. The Modlin Fortress as the lone bastion had been under the siege by Russians for nearly a year. It surrendered on 1 December 1813.



# THE THREE CULTURES

## THE RUSSIAN CULTURE

The Russian period in the Modlin Fortress began just after its surrender in 1813 when the Russians entered the Fortress. For several years, they had not undertaken attempts to rebuild it but after the fall of the November Uprising, they recognised the value of the Fortress' location and included it into the defensive system of the Tsarist Russia. In 1832, the great rebuilding of the Fortress began and the works were supervised by Ivan Dhen aided by General Alexander Feldman. Then, the huge, brick canon posts were erected as well as multi-kilometre external defensive embankment reinforced with Carnot's wall. Within the confines of the unaltered internal space, the construction of two-kilometre defensive barracks began which were finally completed in 1844. The barracks could accommodate even 20 thousand troops. Also new gates were put up like the Poniatowski, Dąbrowski and Ostrołęka Gates while the French Northern Gate was bricked in. The majority of the facilities in the Modlin Fortress which we can see today originates from the Russian times. These are: the Granary, the Dhen's Canon Post, food supplies network, the Utrata Crown, the Meciszewski's Caponier, the Water Tower, the Officers' Canteen, The Tsarist blocks, bath house, laundry, and others. At the end of the 19th century, the Russians also established the park in the Fortress which is called the "Park of Three Cultures" today.

Due to the development of artillery (the second half of the 19th century) and its increasing range, a decision on reinforcement of the Fortress was made. Thus, a building of the huge, frontline Fortress began at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. In 1883-88 eight forts in the shape of brick and earth construction were erected on its outskirts. Although the Fortress was not so long ago rebuilt at the expense of 6 million roubles, the Modlin Fortress required subsequent modernisation because of new kind of artillery grenades. It forced the Russians to rebuild the forts using new materials – concrete and armour plate. The subsequent rebuilding carried out since 1912 included the erection of the external ring of forts and new gunpowder magazines.

The Modlin Fortress was the apple of Tsar Nicolas I's eye. The monarch had visited it as many as 17 times. He received the heads of other states in Modlin. Because of that, a no longer existing small palace was built in the Fortress courtyard, which housed the Tsar's chambers. There were also Tsarist chambers in the no longer existing part of the troop's barracks. He admired excellent views from there spreading at the mouth of the Narew River. The Fortress was also an important centre of the Russian Orthodox Church on the Vistula River, and hence, the church in the barracks' courtyard.

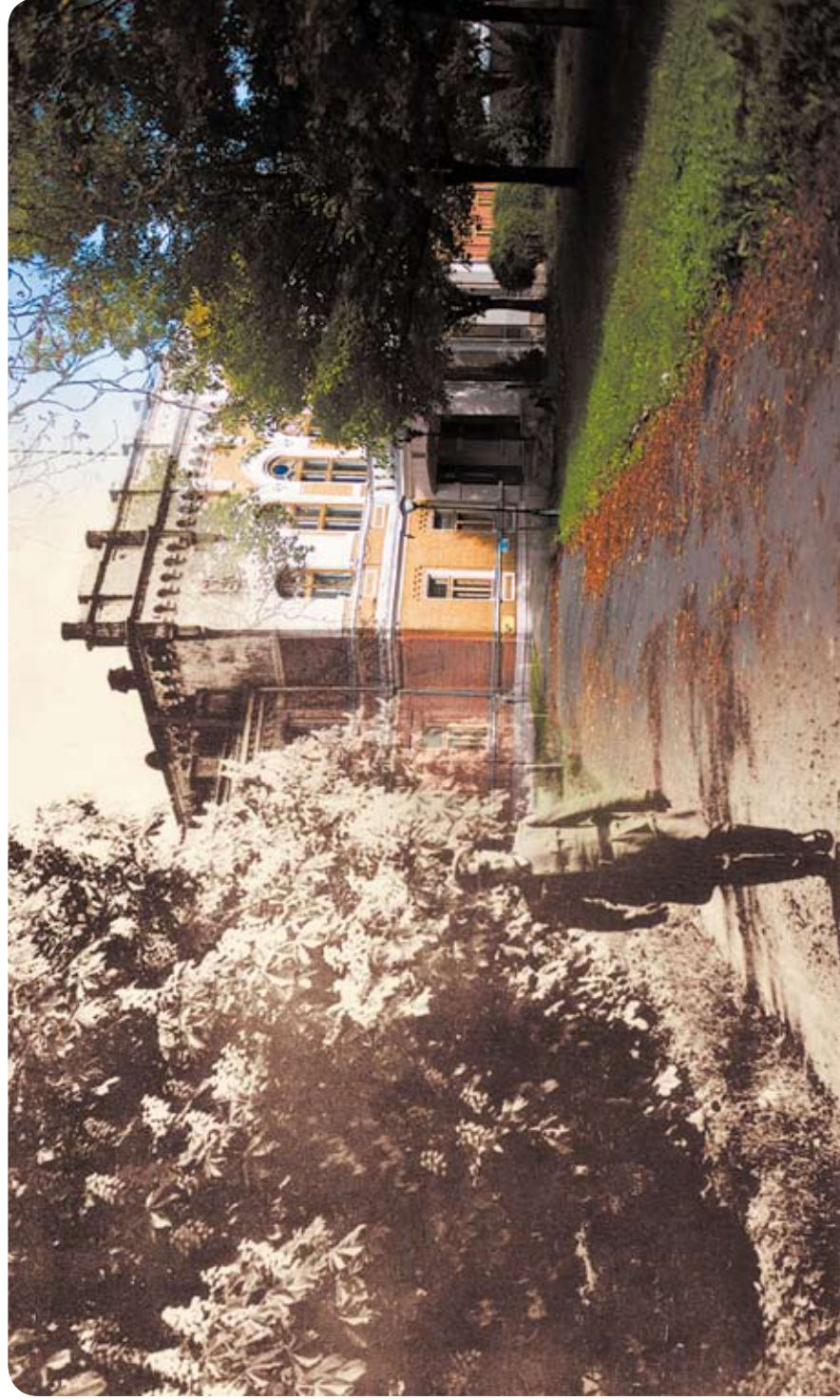
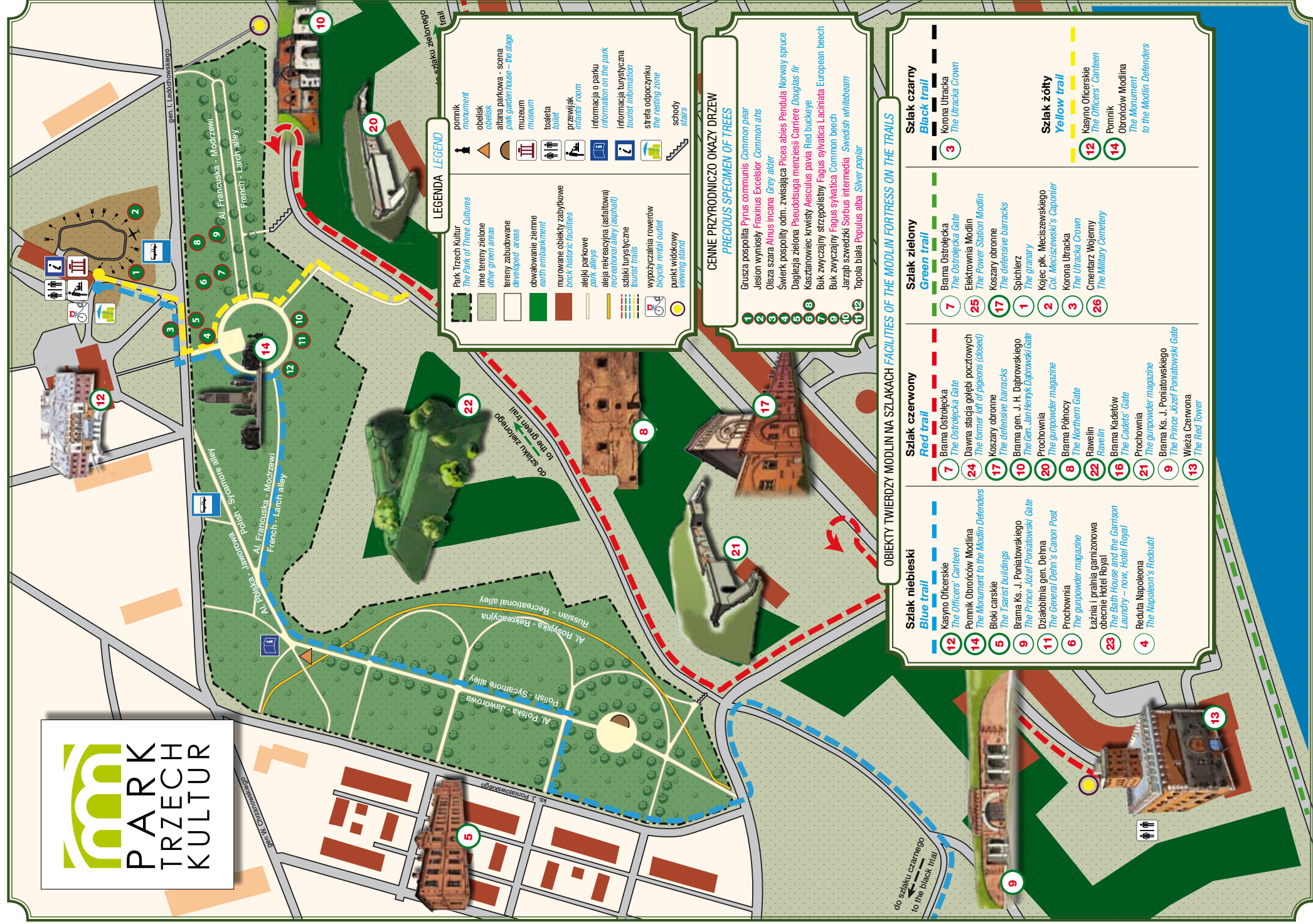
In times of the Russian rule in the Fortress, it was the largest Fortress in the Kingdom of Poland and one of the strongest in the contemporary Europe. In 1834, the Modlin acquired yet another name – Nowogeorgijewsk, to commemorate St. George, the patron of Russia (the highest patron for the most important Fortress in Russia). The name was preserved as the official name until 1915.

The Russian rule in the Modlin Fortress ended on 20 August 1915 when it was conquered by Germans during World War I.





# **PARK** **TRZECZ** **KULTUR**





## THE POLISH CULTURE

Since its beginning, also the Poles had contributed to the heritage of the Modlin Fortress. In the Napoleon times, the fortification works were supervised by Polish military engineers like, for example, Ignacy Prądzyński. The Modlin Fortress has also played an important role in crucial events of the Polish history. They included, for instance, the November Uprising when the Fortress fell into the hands of the insurgents and was a support to the Polish army. Then, the fortification works were also conducted under the management of August Szulc and Ignacy Ledóchowski, the commander of the Fortress. At that time, the mistakes committed by the French designers were corrected. High hopes were raised also in the plans of the January Uprising. Unfortunately, the conspiracy aimed at taking over the ammunition warehouses existing in the Fortress had been uncovered. It is interesting enough that a great rebuilding of the Fortress by Russians under the supervision of General Ivan Dhen was carried out according to the indications left by Ignacy Prądzyński and in cooperation with engineers of Polish descent.

The Polish period in the history of the Modlin Fortress began at the end of World War I when the German crew was disarmed by a group of Polish soldiers. The Polish Army took over the power and Colonel Edward Malewicz became the commander of the Modlin Fortress. Soon after the World War I, yet another important test awaited the Fortress. The Polish-Bolshevik war broke out.

After the fighting ended and in spite of war damages, the Modlin Fortress remained an important military garrison and also played a significant role as a centre of military education. The Fortress accommodated: the Cadets' Corps, The Armoured Weapons School of Cadets, and the Sapper Training Centre. Also the infantry, sapper and engineer units were stationed here. On 8 November 1918, on a decree by Józef Piłsudski, the Polish Navy was established and its first harbour was the Modlin Fortress. Also a shipyard was constructed here where smaller ships were built.

In the pre-war period, the status of the Fortress was altered into a fortified camp. The construction works were limited to the maintenance of the facilities and reinforcement of the forts. It was the time when a Power Station was built which was set in motion by the Electro-Technical Battalion in 1924. Also several blocks of apartments for the military personnel were erected. The former Russian church was denominated

into a Roman Catholic church. Just before the outbreak of World War II, the combat shelters were built.

In September 1939, the Modlin Fortress became an important stronghold in defence of Warsaw. It was defended by 17 thousand troops. After heroic struggle, the Modlin Fortress surrendered as late as on 29 September, a day after the surrender of Warsaw.

After World War II, several thousand troops were stationing in the Fortress. Then, many facilities were demolished including the church in the barracks' courtyard. A building of the military airfield began. In 1958, an elite Higher School of Pilots was established here which has trained thousands of pilots. Also the pilots from the 45<sup>th</sup> Flying



Experimental Squadron were flying in the Modlin sky. Today, the aeroplanes of the Warszawa-Modlin Mazovian Airport – a civilian airfield established on the basis of the former military airfield are flying over the Fortress.

The facilities from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century which have been preserved in the Fortress include – the fort cemetery, probably established by Germans (the first tombstone comes from 1915). The cemetery was then used as a burial place of the victims of the 1914-1939 wars as well as those who were killed during World War II. Also members of the families of the garrison troops were buried at the necropolis.

## ARCHITECTURE

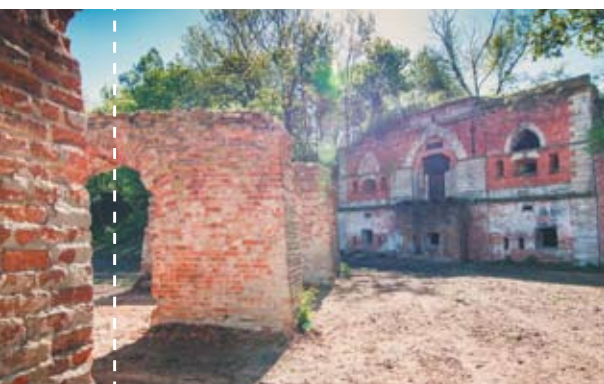
The crucial architectural conception concerning tidying the Park of Three Cultures referred to the historic set of paths and squares compatible with the original composition from the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. To achieve this purpose, the course of the existing alleys was corrected and the course of the historic paths was recreated. In this way, the communication route has regained its original coherence. The majority of alleys have a mineral surface which matches the surrounding greenness and refers to the historical substratum. The alley with an asphalt surface is used by amateurs of an active recreation (bicycle riding, roller skating, etc.).

The recreated historic composition of the park is based on arches (park alleys) and a circle (squares). This motif was also used in the elements of small architecture and while designing the stage. The stage rails reflect the characteristic balustrades placed on the level of the Officers' Canteen's roof. The squares have been paved by concrete slabs which were once used in the representative places of the Fortress (for instance, at the entrance to the canteen).



There are two squares in the park – The Monument to the Modlin Defenders of 1939 is situated on one of them and the stage in the shape of a garden house is situated on the other one. It refers to the architecture of the times when the park was established. Residents and tourists while using the park can experience the mixture of the three cultures which had a greatest impact on the creation and development of the Modlin Fortress. The three main park alleys bear the names of these cultures. At each of them, information boards were placed which inform on the influence of a given culture on the Modlin Fortress and its European cultural heritage. We invite you to take walking tours and to discover the Park of Three Cultures, and then, the entire Fortress!





## THE CLOSEST NEIGHBOURHOOD

### THE FORMER OFFICERS' CANTEEN

The canteen for the Russian officers is a facility of a palatial nature. It was established around 1905. It was built in the shape of letter T with the arcade, roofed driveway and a terrace above. It was an extremely modern facility as for the beginning of the 20th century. It was electrified, had its own boiler house and unique stem heating system. A novelty of the kind was also a certain form of air-conditioning which secured the exchange of air through ventilation holes and the circuits of the used air outlets concealed under the chandeliers in the ornamented rosettes. On 19 August 1915, an initial surrender of the Nowogiergijewsk was signed in the canteen's Grand Hall. In the mid-war period, the canteen was visited by the most prominent representatives of the authorities of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Republic. Due to its unique interior, the building was often used by film crews as a stage set.



### THE MONUMENT TO THE MODLIN DEFENDERS

To commemorate the heroic struggle, the Monument to the Modlin Defenders of September 1939 has been put up. The monument was unveiled by the commander of the Modlin Defence in 1939, General Brigadier Wiktor Thommee. The ceremony was held on 29 September 1957, on the anniversary of the Modlin Fortress surrender. The monument was designed by Ryszard Lasota. Earlier, the monument of Józef Piłsudski was standing there. While putting up the Monument to the Defenders, the mound with the stairs and the plinth were used which are thought to be the remnants of the monument from the Tsarist times.



### THE DĄBROWSKI GATE WITH PIERS OF THE BRIDGE

The two-storey gate was of a defensive character. The elevation facing the barracks is modest and has the features of the Neo-Gothic architecture. The external threshold of the gate was situated high above the Fortress ditch. To enable soldiers and vehicles leaving the place a bridge on brick piers set in the moat was added to the gate. The piers of that bridge have been preserved until today. It is interesting that the bridge's line was sharply broken to omit the neighbouring cannon post. In the north-eastern part of the park, there is a Fortress road crossing the slope with a fragment of the weapons' yard (the prolongation of Dąbrowskiego Street which originally ran through the bridge over the moat to the Dąbrowski Gate).



### THE LARCH ALLEY

The larch trees were probably planted in connection with the establishment of the park and the construction of the canteen, as the representative surrounding of the object. The larch trees are growing in the middle of the alley along the straight line to the plinth of the Monument to the Modlin Defenders. Now, there are 9 preserved trees between 70 and 100 years old and the remaining ones are mostly 40-70 years old. Those trees are also visible from Ledóchowskiego Street. Colonel Tadeusz Bojczewski involved in its construction wrote in his memoirs that this street is so



## THE CLOSEST NEIGHBOURHOOD

"curvy" because the commander had ordered that none of the larch trees could have been cut off during its building.

### THE NORTHERN GATE

It has also been dubbed "The Plock Gate" or "The Duchy of Warsaw Gate". A keystone in the shape of a trapeze placed in the arch of the bricked gate is its interesting architectural element. There is a relief of the eagle of the Duchy of Warsaw with keys in its talons and the inscription "The Northern Gate" on the keystone as well as with the date of its erection – 1811. The gate connected the roads from Warsaw through Jabłonna and Nowy Dwór with the road leading to Plock. To get onto the Plock Tract one had to cross two bridges, drive through the middle of the Fortress, get to the road running on the bottom of the moat through the Gate and its exit turning right, and then, reach the proper tract. The drive through the Fortress obviously excluded any accidental or undesired movement on a very important communication trail. The gate had played its functions until the time of the great expansion of the Fortress in 1832-1841. Then, it was bricked and became a canon post with the third artillery hole placed centrally in the bricked gate. The Northern Gate, beside the Napoleon's Redoubt is the oldest brick historic monument in the Modlin Fortress.



### THE RAVELIN

The internal defensive circuit consisting, among others, of earth reinforcements constitutes the oldest part of the Modlin Fortress. It was built in 1806-1807 and then modernised (in 1811-12 and after 1831). The ravelin opposite the Northern Gate was built on the plan of the triangle revealing the curtain in the Fortress moat. The earth reinforcement which was located here in the Napoleon's times was of a different shape.



### THE 1811 GUNPOWDER MAGAZINE

The Gunpowder Magazine was built of bricks and was modernised in the later period. It is different than other, mostly concrete, places of this kind. It was built as the first gunpowder magazine in the Fortress when, together with its expansion, the number of the artillery units multiplied and the problem of safe preservation and storage of gunpowder, explosives, cannon and carbine balls had emerged. The subsequent gunpowder magazines were built in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 19th century, together with the expansion of the first line of forts. At its outskirts, nine brick powder magazines were erected which then were modernised with concrete. The neighbouring powder magazine (closer to the Cadets' Gate) in 1939 accommodated the headquarters of the commanding staff of the Modlin's defence.







## THE CLOSEST NEIGHBOURHOOD

### THE BARRACKS AND THE CADETS' GATE

The defensive barracks were built during the great Russian expansion of 1832-1844 on the orders of General Todleben. Regarding the longest military facility in Europe, they are over 2 kilometres long. They were meant to play the role of the last bastion of the Modlin Fortress. They could accommodate up to 20,000 soldiers. Three towers were erected and incorporated into the barracks building; one the "White Tower" in its southern part at the eastern end of the building, and two, "The Red Tower" and "The Water Tower" at its western end of the northern part of the building. The axis of the building was divided by a corridor distinguishing two of its principal parts: the external, combat part and the internal – a residential part. The walls of the external part which could be exposed to the destructive effects of the bullets were 182 cm thick, and the internal and partition walls, less exposed to the gunfire – 120 cm. The front walls of the external part had carbine and gun shooting holes and the additional defence was provided by the caponiers attached to the building walls from which a gunfire could be conducted along the walls. The communication inside and outside of the barracks was secured by 8 gates and 4 of them still continue to play their communication functions. In 1919-1926, the barracks housed No 2 Cadets' Corps. One of the gates (close to the park garden house – the stage) bears its name.



### THE TSARIST BLOCKS

They were built in 1897-1903 as the residential buildings for the cadres of the Russian Army. These are two-storey buildings with no cellars (instead of cellars there are characteristic cells). There are decorative tops over the staircases, and on some of them, there are inscriptions with the dates of their erection. It has to be noted that in the Russian Army there was a clear division between officers and non-commissioned officers. The officers' apartments were built at today's Księcia Józefa Poniatowskiego Street, and the non-commissioned officers' apartments were built in the triangle of Moniuszki, Kadetów and Szpitalna Streets. Now, these are the private apartments.



## NATURE



The most numerous plants and trees in the park include locusts, maple trees, ash trees and poplar trees. The greatest density of trees over 120 years old can be observed in the middle arch between the Polish and Russian alleys (the vicinity of the stage). At the back of the Monument to the Modlin Defenders, there is the only mountain ash tree which is over 100 years old and is particularly interesting due to its joined branches creating a huge tree trunk of a monumental nature, unfortunately, withering. It is a strictly protected specimen. These are not the only natural curiosities in the Modlin Fortress. At the entrance to the Fortress cemetery, there is a monument of nature – the polar tree. The protected area NATURA 2000 includes the Modlin Forts (a winter habitat of the chiropters) and the entire section of the Vistula River in Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki.





## THE CYCLICAL EVENTS

The Modlin outdoor film screenings  
The active recreation with three cultures

Celebrations of the anniversaries of the defence of the Modlin Fortress  
History of Europe in the heart of Poland

More information available at [www.nowydwormaz.pl](http://www.nowydwormaz.pl)

## THE TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE

164 Bałki Murmańskiej Street  
tel. 0 22 713 32 79

[www.3rzeki.pl](http://www.3rzeki.pl)

Open Tuesday to Sunday between 10 a. m. and 4.00 p. m.

- Free maps and guidebooks
- WC
- Infants' room
- WiFi
- Resting place for tourists
- Bicycle rental outlet ([www.rowery.nowydwormaz.pl](http://www.rowery.nowydwormaz.pl))



## THE MUSEUM EXHIBITION AT THE MODLIN FORTRESS

164 Bałki Murmańskiej Street

Open Tuesday to Sunday between 10 a.m. and 5.00 p. m.

- The exhibition of the military equipment (guns, amphibian transporter, ISKRA aeroplane, etc.).

## BAŚKA MURMAŃSKA

The polar bear which came to the Modlin Fortress after World War I from Russia together with the Polish troops.

The bear saluted Marshal Piłsudski in Warsaw. A special trail for the youngest tourists is bearing its name.

It runs also through the Park of Three Cultures.

More information at [www.baskamurmanska.pl](http://www.baskamurmanska.pl)







**PROGRAM  
REGIONALNY**  
NARODOWA STRATEGIA SPÓJNOŚCI

**Mazowsze.**  
serce Polski

UNIA EUROPEJSKA  
EUROPEJSKI FUNDUSZ  
ROZWOJU REGIONALNEGO



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